

Housing/Public Facilities Forum, Sept 16, 2004

Panelists' biographies:

Jack McGrory served as City Manager of the City of San Diego from 1991-1997. Since 1997 he has been President and Chief Executive Officer of Price Enterprises, Inc. He has also served as Chief Operating Officer of the San Diego Padres and on the University of California, San Diego Board of Overseers. Jack holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from San Diego State University and a Juris Doctorate from the University of San Diego.

Tom Mullaney is president of Friends of San Diego, a group which provides input on growth management and quality of life issues in the San Diego region. He owns a mortgage business and has a background in real estate and electrical engineering. Tom received an MBA and BS in Electrical Engineering from the University of Colorado.

Donald Cohen co-founded the Center of Policy Initiatives; a think tank which focuses on issues of concern to lower and middle income people. He is a former political director for the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Donald has over 22 years of experience as an organizer and trainer in strategy, policy and organization.

Toni Atkins has been serving as the Third District Councilmember since 2001 and is currently serving as Deputy Mayor. She chairs the Workforce Partnership Board, serves on the Metropolitan Transit Board, the SANDAG Regional Housing Task Force and the City-County Joint Homeless Task Force. Toni has led the Council effort to address housing affordability issues and to enact a Housing State of Emergency in San Diego.

Notes:

Toni Atkins—

- Tremendous problems with lack of housing and infrastructure particularly in her district.
- She does not own a home herself
- Problems should not be blamed on NIMBY-ism alone
- Lack of parking is a problem

Jack McGrory—

- Housing needed due to population and employment growth
- Housing Task Force determined need to be 8400 units per year
- Housing Task Force determined that 3700 of these units per year should be for lower income groups
- Infrastructure has been studied to death
- North of I-8 communities have Cadillac public facilities
- South of I-8 communities have substandard public facilities
- Prop 13 caused cities in Calif. to become wards of the State
- Trash tax is regressive. Only multi-family residents pay. Wealthy La Jolla single family owners do not pay. Council refuses to change this.
- New revenue sources badly needed. Council resistant to new taxes
- San Diego is America's cheapest city

- \$11 month parcel tax plus \$1 billion bond were proposals of Affordable Housing Task Force
- If problem is not solved poor people will continue to suffer and we will see more overcrowding

Tom Mullaney—

- More growth will cause quality of life decline
- 4 times as many people move to San Diego as are born here
- Studies show that existing community plans actually have capacity for 108,000 units by 2030 while SANDAG projection is that we only need capacity for 88,000 so we have more capacity for housing than we even need
- New development should pay its own way

Donald Cohen

- Good consensus has been reached on problems but insufficient next steps-e.g. solutions
- This is an economic development problem
- Not in my wallet as big a problem as not in my backyard
- Every revenue source gores someone's ox and interest group has knee jerk opposition
- Gentrification is a problem. Too late for downtown to provide affordable housing due to high land costs and now gentrification is occurring in neighborhoods around downtown

Toni Atkins

- Uptown DIF has been raised to reasonable level
- Legislative restrictions on use of DIF funds to relieve past deficits
- Electorate will not even support TOT tax on tourists, so work remains to convince electorate to support new revenue sources

Jack McGrory

- We cannot charge new development to pay for sins of the past
- TOT measure was a back room deal by special interest groups that provided no money for housing

Tom Mullaney

- DIF's are much too low in some communities
- DIFs need to be updated, increased in some areas
- People would pay for facilities if they did not think it was to subsidize new development

Q and A

Public comment

- Housing should now go north of I-8 where facilities are better
- What about water issue?

Jack McGrory

- Affordable Housing Task Force recommended that all communities take some multi-family housing and incentives should go to those areas that accept more density

Toni Atkins

- Density should not all go into older areas.
- Water supply is a problem

Public comment

- Does new subdivision in Scripps Ranch drive growth?

Tom Mullaney

- Job growth should not be encouraged now.

Donald Cohen

- Structure of economy is troubling.
- Economies that are more unequal grow slower than those that are well balanced.
- Minimum wage ordinance being proposed is needed.
- New ballpark development encouraged low wage jobs with no health care.

Chris Christianson

- Condo conversions are a market based solution to housing problem
- Parking regulations should not be toughened for condo conversions

Jack McGrory

- Parking ratios are too high in San Diego. Consultant study shows this. His project in City Heights has 20 vacant spaces.

Tony Atkins

- There are existing parking deficiencies
- Transit is inadequate, people in San Diego need vehicles
- Condo conversions help foster first time homeownership but hurt poor renters.

Public comment

- Suggests that 25% of land in MSCP areas be developed

Tom Mullaney

- We can protect open spaces and build housing

Jack McGrory

- We do not need to build on open space areas, should instead develop other underutilized public lands
- Public lands such as Rose Canyon Maintenance Yard, Montgomery Field and unused school sites could be used for housing

Public comment

- Need to build accessible units
- People need to age in place
- Inaccessible units should be taxed

Carolyn Chase

- Its hard to believe there is a housing shortage because she is voting on hundreds of units every week.
- More data is needed to analyze proposed projects such as emergency response times
- Criticizes Transnet for exempting commercial and industrial projects from paying development impact fees.

Jack McGrory

- Criticized two thirds vote requirement “What happened to ‘one person – one vote’?”
- Fiscal system is broken
- Retail should be last thing that comes in.
- Tax breaks for retail are wrong—result of Prop 13

Public comment

- Older areas have character of their own

Jim Varnador

- Low mod set aside for redevelopment areas ends up dumping density in poor neighborhoods because there are no redevelopment areas in wealthy areas
- Parking overlay zones and tandem parking should not be allowed
- Bus system is bad. MTDB staff is not competent. Better service possible if planning removed from MTDB.

Daniel Beeman

- Suggests that coop housing should be explored
- Property tax reductions needed

Gary Weber

- 5 myths: 1. More housing = more affordable housing 2. Infrastructure precedes density 3. San Diego has transit corridors –we don’t. We have arterials with occasional bus service. 4 Reducing parking requirements will aid affordable housing. 5. We can have different park/facilities standards in older communities.
- Interest only mortgages bad idea
- Density should go in areas that have good facilities

John Mc Nabb

- We are putting people in smaller and smaller boxes—analogy to animals in zoo.
- We should do the right thing in redeveloping Sports Arena. We did wrong thing at Naval Training Center

Public comment

- It takes \$138,000 to qualify to buy a house in San Diego
- San Diego is one of the top cities in cost of living but much lower in wages paid
- Wealth from tourist industries leaves City to corporate headquarters
- Tax breaks should not go to companies that create low wage jobs